



December 15, 2016

NAVAIR financial manager recognized for creating planning tool



Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD AT&L) Frank Kendall presents Denise Mallett with the Defense Acquisition Workforce Individual Achievement Award for Financial Management during the Defense Acquisition Workforce awards ceremony in the Hall of Heroes, Pentagon, Dec. 8. During her tenure as the lead BFM for the H-1 U.S. Marine Corps Light/Attack Helicopters program office (PMA-276), Mallett developed a planning database now used by the command to manage all appropriated funds.

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — NAVAIR's lead business financial manager (BFM) of the year, Denise Mallett, was also recognized with the Defense Acquisition Workforce Individual Achievement Award for Financial Management by acquisition chief Frank Kendall at the Pentagon Dec. 8. Mallett created a database that revolutionized the way the command performs acquisition financial management.

After prototyping and proving the concept in the H-1 U.S. Marine Corps Light/Attack Helicopters program office (PMA-276), where Mallett served as the lead BFM, she passionately explained her vision to NAVAIR leadership, resulting in the go-ahead to develop a SQL-server based tool that could be used across NAVAIR to manage all appropriated funds. In October, Mallett moved to the Industrial and Logistics Competency as the lead BFM.

Her tool—originally called the spend plan database, now NAVAIR's Common Spend Plan Tool (CSPT)—integrates all program office financial planning information, connects the



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data with Navy ERP and standardizes financial processes across every program office. Before her tool, financial plans were stove-piped in hundreds of disconnected and standalone spreadsheets—now her planning tool seamlessly integrates more than \$68.1 billion and almost 800 budget accounts, providing unprecedented visibility, insight and speed.

"I had just started as the lead BFM in H-1 and was having trouble getting my arms around everything I needed to do because each integrated program team (IPT) had their own different workbook, and each BFM even within each IPT had a separate workbook for their ledger and their documents with the comptroller. I was struggling to get all of that data into one place," Mallett said.

The H-1 program office is co-located with the Presidential Helo program, and it was there that lead BFM Matt Aley introduced Mallett to the Microsoft Access database he used.

She took a two-day Access training course, then spent evenings and weekends programming it herself. Once developed for the H-1 program, other program managers asked if she could show it to them and share it. While Mallett was able to share the database on a disk, any improvements or new functionality could not be passed along easily, she said.

"I didn't have a training package, a help desk or reference guide, or any mechanism to distribute changes, so it has been hard to share, but now that we have the common tool centrally managed and supported by the command, it has become a common process tool," Mallett said.

The tool offers several advantages for program managers and BFMs.

BFMs now spend less time on data redundancy, manual re-entry and looking for the data, she said. "Now you can just cut to the chase, get the data, do the analysis, make the decision and go. For example, if leadership calls and wants to know how much money your whole program sent to a particular contractor, open the tool, filter your criteria, and you have your answer.

"It also saves time for lead BFMs, who now have access to data with consistent field names, making data easier to find and consolidate. Within a minute you can have the answer instead of spending hours gathering it," she said.

"Without Ms. Mallett's vision and persistence, CSPT would not exist in its current state," said Capt. Aaron Traver, director of operations for the Program & Business Analysis Department. "We have been able to roll out CSPT to over 1,000 users in 2016, with more users being added daily.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive and this is a testament to the countless



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hours invested by Ms. Mallett to ensure CSPT would be useful, intuitively simple and flexible enough to accommodate everyone in this very complex and dynamic organization," Traver said.

Mallett was first recognized for her planning tool in October, when she was named NAVAIR's BFM of the Year, starting what Todd Washington, director, Program & Business Analysis Department, envisions as an annual award.

"It's most impressive that Denise supported the CSPT development while also continuing her stellar performance as the PMA-276 Lead BFM," Washington said. "Her ability to manage both of these significant, dynamic and complex responsibilities—without negative impact to either—was a testament to her commitment and dedication to the Navy and NAVAIR."

Earning NAVAIR's first BFM of the Year validated Mallett's work ethic, she said.

"Being selected for the Department of Defense-level award has been exponentially even more flattering. It is definitely a great advertisement for the support that NAVAIR leadership at all levels has for this tool, recognizing that it saves time and adds value to the operation and mission that we are all doing in the DoD."

To Mallett, it is more of a team award.

"There were many people working alongside me and contributing to its fruition, from the developers, the programmers and especially my BFM team. They embraced the change and dealt with the learning curve when sometimes they felt like the new database was so much harder than their old spreadsheets. They really did hang with it, along with the program managers and the IPT leads who gave it a chance to succeed," she said.

Mallett is proud of the role BFM's play.

"We do more than data entry, write checks and create funding documents; we are a very supportive team that serves as the financial conscience of NAVAIR and are the subject matter experts helping to facilitate the decisions made by the command."